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ABSTRACT

This trainer's guide is intended to assist supervisors of work-based career training projects in helping students trace one job application through to completion in order to understand the job application process and to appreciate how hiring decisions are made. The guide is one in a series of core curriculum modules that is intended for use in combination on- and off-the-job programs to familiarize youth with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for success in the workplace. Included in the guide are the following components: project information, a summary of the content and approach of the guide, supervisor's notes, off-the-job tutor's notes, background information, lists of tasks and core skills, an action plan that includes suggested learning activities, supervisor and trainee review sheets, and an assessment form. (MN)

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# Youth Training Scheme CORE EXEMPLAR WORK BASED PROJECT

## Who gets the job?

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ESF
CORE SKILLS PROJECT
YTS

OTF No: 1

PROJECT No: M|8

TYPE Individual

The Further Education Staff College
Coombe Lodge, Blagdon, Bristol, BS18 6RG ✆ 0761-62503

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## ASSESSMENT OF CORE SKILLS

This series of projects contains a number of different formats for recording assessment of core skills. These formats are offered for experimental purposes; none is proven as the 'best' method. All are based on the principle that feedback to trainees is a necessary part of the learning process and that such feedback should include information on core skill development.

Further work is being carried out on the methods of assessing achievement of core skills in work-based learning and of how to log such achievement on a record which trainees can take away from YTS. Some of the results of this work will be included in later MSC/ESF Core Skills Project publications.

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# CONTENTS

Introduction

Project Information

Summary

Supervisor's Notes

TRAINEE'S GUIDE

Names and Times

Background and Situation

Purposes

Action Plan

Trainee Review

Supervisor Review

Assessment — Explanatory Notes

Assessment Form

# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT ARE WORK-BASED PROJECTS?

Work-based projects are learning materials which aim to make the most of all the possibilities for developing trainees' skills, knowledge and attitudes in the workplace. They build upon everyday workplace tasks to provide experience of the whole range of YTS learning opportunities.

The projects in this series have been tested with managing agents as part of the YTS Core Project, which is jointly financed by MSC and the European Social Fund. In some cases managing agents will be able to use the projects as they are. In others they will need to be adapted to the circumstances of a particular workplace or to the aims of a particular scheme. Some managing agents will prefer to produce their own projects. For such cases these examples aim to demonstrate some principles of good design in work-based learning materials. These principles are:

To encourage trainees to learn by doing
To make the most of all the experiences which are available to trainees in the workplaces.
To start from a real task which is seen as relevant by all parties involved — trainees, workplace supervisors, trainers and off-the-job tutors.
To help trainees see the relationships between things learnt on- and off-the-job.
To base the assessment of achievement upon trainees' actual performance in tasks.
To look for all the opportunities for learning which arise from a task and, in particular, to help trainees to develop the core skills. These skills, in number, communication, problem-solving and practical activities, are used in a wide variety of tasks and are essential if trainees are to achieve competence in those tasks*. They are the skills — of finding out information, planning how to do things, overcoming difficulties and so on — which help trainees to learn more quickly in new situations, either in the same workplace, in a different one, or in the world outside work.

Such skills are required naturally by the workplace tasks in these projects and, in requiring trainees to go beyond the task itself, the projects deliberately *add* to the range of core skills which are required in an everyday working situation. This is especially important for some of the skills of communication and problem-solving which trainees are often not given the opportunity to exercise in work experience.

These principles can be incorporated in projects for all placements and for trainees of all ability levels. Although the projects in this series follow a common format, there is no single 'best' style. Nor is any special expertise in writing necessary. Good work-based projects can be produced by anyone who is determined to help trainees to exploit all of the potential for learning in work experience.

*A technical manual 'Core Skills in YTS' is currently available from MSC. It is supported by a short introductory leaflet and a practitioner's guide for supervisors. A separate manual is available on computer literacy/information technology.

# PROJECT INFORMATION

Many routine office jobs and in particular those of junior employees, are often part of a much wider process where the individual employee performs his/her task and the paperwork is then processed to the next section. This may lead to lack of understanding of the whole process, lack of personal identification with the work being done, and loss of job satisfaction. The young trainee may find it even more difficult than an experienced worker to see where his/her task fits in.

This project was written to help remedy this by enabling the trainee to gain wider experience of the complete process of appointing a new member of staff and to use the information gained in a positive way, to the advantage of his own learning opportunities and, indirectly, those of his fellow trainees.

It was originally written for the large personnel section of the WEST MIDLANDS COUNTY COUNCIL where the opportunities for monitoring an appointment are obviously good. The facility was also available to enable all the trainees, (twelve on average) to meet for special sessions when the final presentation of the information gathered for this project could be organised.

In other companies where such a facility was not present, the presentation might be done at the local college as a link with the off-job training.

Tracing through a job application and reporting back, while it has certain obvious benefits to the trainee, is not, of course, the only exercise of this type - most jobs offer opportunities for trainees to follow the whole process through. In addition, the modular structure of the project makes it possible to omit certain parts, whilst leaving many learning opportunities intact.

This project has been used with supervisors from other employers in both the private and public sector and has been found to be readily adaptable to individual company needs and facilities.

# SUMMARY

The trainee is required to trace one job application through to completion, following its progress outside his own working area in order to understand the complete process and to appreciate how the decisions are made, and the costs involved.

# SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

INTRODUCTION

This work based project is designed to focus the trainee upon the CORE SKILL areas of: number; communication; practical skills, and problem-solving. Wherever possible, it is also designed to provide learning opportunities to improve personal effectiveness; to provide wider knowledge of the world of work and elsewhere; and to furnish the trainee with skills which can be transferred to other situations.

The essence of the work based project is that people learn more quickly and effectively by actually doing something.

The following notes are designed to help you, your staff, and the trainee, so that the project can be carried out with a minimum of disruption to normal work activity.

1. Where relevant, please advise other staff that the trainee will be doing the project;

2. Please ensure that the trainee has read the project details and understands what is required;

3. Please ensure that the trainee is aware of any aspects of safety, hygiene or security which might touch upon the project;

4. Please ensure that the trainee appreciates that good planning will make the task easier. Wherever possible, and before the project starts, the trainee should be encouraged to take responsibility for his/her learning by estimating time, deciding on equipment and materials, identifying possible hazards and other problems, and generally "thinking the project through".

5. Upon completion of the project discuss with the trainee the activities he/she has been engaged in. What problems were there? What has he/she learnt? Would he/she tackle the project differently?

Encourage the trainee to complete the trainee's review page.

For this project the following notes may be useful:-

This is a difficult project for some trainees, not only in terms of gathering and analysing the information, but also in recording, storing and organising the material over a period of time. It may be wise to ensure the trainee has a series of deadlines to meet for the various tasks, those being decided by the progress of the appointment procedure, where applicable, and by negotiation between you and the trainee in other instances.

TASK 1

It would obviously be more helpful to the trainee if a job closer to his/her level were chosen, rather than a senior post. Please try to ensure that the trainee can be responsible for the whole process, subject to the usual checks.

TASKS 3 - 9

Please check the trainee's arrangements for the interview and offer whatever help may be needed. The trainee should be encouraged to learn as many lessons as possible about what, apart from formal experience and qualifications, makes a successful applicant.

TASKS 10 and 11

The trainee may or may not produce startling information and recommendations for these tasks, but it is the overall process of gathering and working out the information, analysing it, making the necessary comparisons and finally reporting it accurately to you that is important.

TASKS 12 - 14

You will have to indicate to the trainee what resources are available for the presentation and perhaps give some instruction on their use.

It may be wiser to discuss with the trainee the correct company procedure for organising a gathering of trainees before allowing your trainee to start the arrangements.

# Names

TRAINEE .....

SUPERVISOR .....

TUTOR .....

# Times

Please fill in the table below. This will show the time you spend on completing this project. The first column has been filled in as an example. Make another table if you need more space.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| DATE | 16/6 | | | |
| START | 1.30 | | | |
| FINISH | 3.00 | | | |
| | | | | |
| TIME SPENT (HOURS) | 1 ½ | | | |

# BACKGROUND

In your Department you may have seen information relating to jobs available in the COUNTY COUNCIL. You may have been involved in sending information to people who have applied for a job or in filing forms as they are returned. Perhaps you have wondered who finally got the job and who makes the decision. This project should help you find out.

# SITUATION

This project was originally written for the PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT of the WEST MIDLANDS COUNTY COUNCIL.

# PURPOSES

Overall, this project should enable you to see your own job in perspective. The knowledge you gain of the processes of appointment should also help you in your own job applications.

Doing this project will enable you to learn more about the COUNTY COUNCIL. It will also help you to develop your CORE SKILLS (number, communication, problem-solving, and practical skills). Increasing your abilities in these skills will make it easier for you to change jobs and retrain when the need arises.

The tasks you are asked to do are outlined below, together with the most important CORE SKILLS that they contain. When you have finished each task, ask your supervisor to tell you how well she/he thought you did in the task, and record this on the Assessment Form near the back of this Project. This record will be needed to complete your Certificate at the end of your YTS year.

| WBP TASK | ACTIVITY | CORE SKILL | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 & 2 | Find out information about the job vacancy and how it is advertised. | Find out information by speaking to other people. | 6.1 |
| 3. | Prepare to deal with enquiries about the vacancy. | Plan how to present information. | 9.6 |
| 4. | Examine the returned application forms and keep notes on them. | Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. | 7.3 |
| 5. | Make all the necessary arrangements for the interviews. | Plan the order of activities. | 9.1 |
| | | Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. | 7.3 |
| 6. | Interview the person responsible for shortlisting. | Find out information by speaking to other people. | 6.1 |
| 7. | Look after the candidates on the interview day. | Offer assistance to other people in the workplace. | 8.4 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 8. | Interview one of the interview panel. | Plan how to find information. 9.7<br>Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1 |
| 9. | Find out what happens after the appointment is made. | Find out information by speaking to other people. 6.1<br>Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3 |
| 10. | Find out the cost of making the appointment. | Work out numerical information. 1.2 |
| 11. | Present a report to your supervisor on the effectiveness of the appointments procedure. | Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3<br>Monitor a process of activity. 11.2<br>Compare the cost of different goods and services. 5.1 |
| 12. | Plan how to present the information to fellow trainees, choosing between different methods. | Plan how to present information. 9.6<br>Decide between different courses of action. 10.3 |
| 13. | Produce materials to help others to understand the process of appointment, by using the information you have gathered. | Identify or locate tools, materials & equipment. 12.2<br>Manipulate objects or materials. 13.3<br>Check products or results of activity for quality and accuracy. 14.2 |
| 14. | Present the information to fellow trainees and others. | Provide information by speaking to other people in the workplace. 7.1<br>Provide information in writing, and by means of tables and diagrams. 7.3 |

Each CORE SKILL is identified by number in the PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE to the YTS CORE, which contains advice and guidance on what CORE SKILLS are and their uses. The numbers are included here for ease of reference.

# ACTION PLAN

Read through all the tasks in this project before starting work on it, and check anything you don't understand with your supervisor. It may take several weeks to complete all of the stages in the project, so you will need to keep a careful record of your findings as you go along.

In order to monitor the way in which the COUNTY COUNCIL makes appointments to job vacancies you will need to find out information about

(i) the procedure followed

(ii) the costs involved in this procedure.

This will enable you to check the effectiveness of the procedure and, where necessary, to make recommendations for improving it.

For this project, you are asked to select a job vacancy that has recently occurred, or is about to occur, and to follow it through to the appointment being made.

TASK 1

With the help of your supervisor, select a job in the COUNTY COUNCIL that is about to become vacant and for which you can be responsible for handling the paperwork. Make an appointment to see the current job-holder. Think carefully about the questions you intend to ask at the meeting and discuss these with your supervisor beforehand. At the meeting, find out exactly what the job involves, the duties carried out, and the responsibilities of the post.

Obtain a copy of the official job description and compare it with your notes on the job. Is it very different? If it is, discuss with your supervisor possible reasons for this and make a note of your conclusions in your notebook.

TASK 2

Find out about how and where the job is to be advertised. Who decides on the wording of the advertisement? Who decides where it is to be placed? Make an appointment to see the person involved, decide what questions you want to ask at the meeting and check them with your supervisor beforehand.

At the meeting, try to find out the reasons behind the decisions, and make a careful note of them. Get copies of all of the advertisement(s) placed and file them for use later.

TASK 3
---

Once the job is advertised, you will need to prepare yourself to handle the enquiries that will come in.

Open a job file. In it put all the relevant information that you will need to send out quickly in response to inquiries about the job. Design a simple form on which you can record the number of applications sent out and the number returned - remember to include all relevant information.

Work out what you will say in reply to telephone enquiries and check this with your supervisor.

Find out what you should do with application forms received after the official closing date.

TASK 4
---

As the completed application forms are returned, record them on the form you have designed. Look through them and pick out three that seem to you to be well-presented and worth a closer look. Pick out another three that are badly presented and which, at first sight, you would not consider. Note the points about both sets of forms that seem to you to be important for you to remember when you come to apply for a job.

Find out from the forms returned how many applications are in response to which advertisement, how many are as a result of personal contacts, and so on. Record this on the form you designed in task 1.

TASK 5
---

After the closing date for applications has passed, you will need to pass all the forms received to the appropriate person so that a shortlist of candidates can be drawn up. These candidates will be invited for interview.

In close consultation with your supervisor, plan the arrangements for the interview. Find out how much time is needed to interview each candidate. Think very carefully about everything you need to take into consideration and work out a timetable for the day. Don't forget to include some time for the interviewing panel to have a break! Discuss this timetable with your supervisor to make sure you have included everything.

Write the letters inviting the shortlisted candidates for interview; check them carefully with your supervisor before sending them out. Double check that the dates and times are correct. When you have your supervisor's agreement, send out the letters of invitation.

Check with your supervisor if you are to be responsible f inviting the members of the interview panel. If you are, draft a letter for them and check it with your supervisor before sending it off.

TASK 6

Make an appointment to interview the person who drew up the shortlist. Find out the sort of things she/he was looking for. Are there any tips on completing application forms that you can pick up from this interview? Make the most of the opportunity to find out anything that could be useful when you come to apply for a job. Find out whether the three applicants whose well-presented forms you looked at in task 4 were included on the shortlist.

TASK 7

On the day of the interview, put your timetable into operation. Greet the candidates, try to put them at ease, and deal with any routine matters such as claims for repayment of expenses. During the day check from time to time that all is going well, and that the candidates are being looked after. Pay special attention to whether, generally, the candidates look well-prepared for the interview. How are they dressed? Are they punctual? Make a mental note of your answer to these and any other points that occur to you. After the interviews are over, make a note of anything that happened that could help you when you get an interview for a job.

TASK 8

Once the successful candidate has been chosen, all unsuccessful candidates (whether on the shortlist or not) must be notified. Find out how this is done, and if you are responsible for doing it.

Make an appointment to talk to someone who was on the interview panel. Plan the questions you would like to ask very carefully and discuss them with your supervisor. Try to find out why the successful candidate was chosen. How did the successful candidate present him/herself at the interview? Make careful notes. The information you get could be very useful with interviews you get for jobs.

TASK 9

Where does the paperwork go from here? Find out from speaking to other workers what happens to the unsuccessful application forms. Find out how the appointment of the successful applicant is progressed - what letters and forms have to be sent and completed? Why are they necessary? Which other Departments are involved? Make notes on what you find out so that the information can be used in your report.

TASK 10
---

You have now found out a lot about the procedure followed to appoint someone to a job vacancy at the COUNTY COUNCIL. Next you need to work out, as carefully and accurately as possible, the costs involved in making the appointment. Discuss with your supervisor who you should ask for help in getting the information you need. Make the necessary appointments, plan your meetings carefully, and keep a note of what you find out.

You should aim to work out at least the following information:-

(i) the cost of designing the advertisement;

(ii) the cost of placing the advertisement(s);

(iii) the cost of postage in sending out information;

(iv) the cost of postage in sending out the "no thank you" letters;

(v) other costs (e.g.the cost in clerical officers' time in producing information; posting letters, etc.) - this may have to be an informed guess or estimate!

(vi) interview expenses paid to candidates;

(vii) other costs associated with the interview (e.g. allowances paid to interview panel; refreshments, etc.) - again, these may have to be informed guesses.

You should now be able to work out the total cost of making the appointment. This will not be absolutely accurate, but should be as near as you can get to the real cost. Make a note of this.

TASK 11
---

You now need to think about all of the information you have gathered and worked out on

the procedure of making an appointment and

the costs of making that appointment so that you can present your own ideas on the whole process to your supervisor.

Think about the following questions, and any others that occur to you:

Are any forms of advertisement more effective than others?

Are any media (e.g. newspapers; Job centres) more effective than others? (you should compare the costs of each with the number of replies received from each to get an answer to this.)

Are any parts of the procedure unnecessarily expensive or inefficient?

Could any parts of the procedure be made cheaper?

Do the shortlisting and interview procedures seem to be fair?

From the answers that you give, based on the evidence you have, write a report to your supervisor on the effectiveness of the appointment procedure, suggesting improvements if possible, and especially ways of reducing the costs of making appointments. Discuss your report with your supervisor, and if he agrees with your conclusions, ask him if you can take them further and get them introduced.

TASK 12

Even if your supervisor did not agree with your recommendations in Task 11, the information you have gathered can still be of great value to you and others, especially other trainees. The next set of tasks asks you to present the information you have gathered to a group of fellow trainees as part of your off-the-job training programme.

First of all think very carefully about the kind of information you have got and the best way of presenting it. You might start by thinking about information you have got that might improve your chances when applying for a job. How are you going to present this? As a short talk? As a poster? As a leaflet?

Or you might start by thinking about the costs of filling vacancies and your ideas for reducing them. Again, how are you going to present this? Charts and graphs? Film slides? Handouts?

Again, you might start by thinking about the procedure, especially any parts of it which might be important in getting a job, like knowing what "closing date" means! How can the procedure by presented? As a flow chart? As an organisation chart? As an index of forms? You must decide what you wish to present and the best way of presenting it.

TASK 13
---

Once you have decided on what information to present and how you intend to present it, you need to organise your presentation. You will need to discuss your ideas with your tutor and organise an allocation of time. You will also need to prepare any materials you need (handouts, charts, diagrams, film slides, etc.), making sure that you have available and can use any necessary tools and equipment (from paper and pen to slide projector). You should involve your tutor a lot with this, asking advice and getting help and co-operation whenever you need it. Make sure that your presentation material is clear and accurate.

TASK 14
---

Now comes the easy bit! Once you have prepared all of your material, present it to your fellow trainees at the time agreed with your tutor.

# TRAINEE REVIEW

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE AND DISCUSS IT WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR AND TUTOR.

1. Were you offered a selection of Projects to choose from? If so, why did you choose this one?

2. What did you think of it? Was it - easy, hard, interesting or boring?

3. What did you learn? (Look at the list of Purposes).

4. Did you learn something which was not on the list of Purposes?

5. Did you need help with any particular part of the Project? What kind of help did you get?

6. Were there any words in the Project that you did not understand? Please list them.

7. Do you think you could use what you learned in another job, or outside work?

8. Has this Project helped you decide whether you need further training in certain areas?

# SUPERVISOR REVIEW

Please refer to Supervisor's Notes.

Please read the questions included under Trainee Review.

Please complete the Assessment Form and discuss your assessment with the trainee before initialling it to show that you both agree with the assessment.

---

COMMENTS:

# ASSESSMENT
## explanatory notes

In completing this wbp the trainee has the opportunity to demonstrate competence in the CORE SKILLS listed on the attached form.

The first two columns list the wbp Tasks and the CORE SKILLS which occur within them.

You are asked to assess the trainee's competence in these CORE SKILLS according to the amount of support from you that the trainee needed, for example:-

1) if a trainee is asked to "find information from written sources" and you provide the trainee with all the sources of that information, together with telling the trainee where to look in any particular source, then that trainee is obviously being given much more support in finding that information than a trainee who identifies the sources and extracts correct information unaided;

2) if a trainee is asked to undertake a task which involves "noticing the needs of customers or clients", and needs considerable prompting to approach a customer, then that trainee is obviously being given more support than a trainee who takes the initiative in approaching the customer.

To be regarded as fully competent in the CORE SKILLS, the trainee should need to be offered no more support than you would normally give to any experienced worker.

Most of the time job competence and CORE SKILLS competence are likely to be the same, but sometimes this may not be so. For instance, a trainee involved in machining a particular component may be competent so far as planning the work is concerned (a CORE SKILL), but may not have reached experienced worker speeds (an occupational skill).

Please tick the appropriate box and initial in the space provided, after you have discussed your assessment with the trainee and agreed any further training required.

# ASSESSMENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE WHO GETS THE JOB? WBP NO M/01/079 DATE

TRAINEE'S NAME SUPERVISOR'S NAME

| WBP TASK NO | CORE SKILLS ASSESSED | NEEDED A LOT OF ASSISTANCE | NEEDED SOME ASSISTANCE | LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE | | COMMENTS INCLUDING NO OPPORTUNITY | AGREED INITIALS | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | NEEDS MORE PRACTICE | COMPETENT | | TRAINEE | SUPERVISOR |
| 1,2,6,8 9 | 6.1 Find out information by speaking to other people. | | | | | | | |
| 3,12 | 9.6 Plan how to present information. | | | | | | | |
| 4,5,9, 11,14 | 7.3 Provide information in writing and by means of tables and diagrams. | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 9.1 Plan the order of activities. | | | | | | | |
| 7 | 8.4 Offer assistance to other people in the workplace. | | | | | | | |
| 8 | 9.7 Plan how to find information. | | | | | | | |
| 10 | 1.2 Work out numerical information. | | | | | | | |
| 11 | 11.2 Monitor a process or activity. | | | | | 26 | | |